

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please insert the following paragraph at page 2, before line 1:

The present invention is based on Japanese priority application No. 11-375651, filed on December 28, 1999, and Japanese priority application No. 2000-261565, filed on August 30, 2000, the entire contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 23, line 8, as follows:

As shown in FIG. 8, an object region determining unit (ORD) 23 is provided in the image processing apparatus 2, instead of the standard image setting unit 20 in the image processing apparatus 1 of FIG. 3. An output of the FM 15 is connected to the ORD 23. The ORD 23 receives an object region setting signal (~~ORD~~) (ORS) output by an external control unit (not shown), and determines a ratio of the area of an object region to the entire area of each image of the plurality of object images by performing a known image segmentation process.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 24, line 12, as follows:

In the image processing apparatus 2 of FIG. 8, the data signal indicating the object region determined by the ORD 23 is supplied to the IDC 22. In response to the received data signal, the ~~IDC~~ IDC 22 automatically selects the object image having the largest ratio of the area of the object region to the entire area of the image as the standard image from among the plurality of object images (or the partially overlapping first and second images).

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 24, line 19, as follows:

Further, in the image processing apparatus 2 of FIG. 8, the ~~IDS~~ IDC 22 calculates a direction of the object plane with respect to the image surface of each image. The inclination angle of the viewing direction of each image to the object plane PL can be determined based on the calculated direction of the object plane. If there are two or more object images that have the largest ratio of the object region area to the entire image area, the ORD 23 automatically selects the object image having the smallest inclination angle among such object images, as the standard image. The above automatic selecting function of the ORD 23 in the present embodiment can be applied to another preferred embodiment of the image processing apparatus of the invention which will be described later.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 28, line 1, as follows:

In the above formula, “K” is a constant, “ $I_s(x, y)$ ” denotes the pixel value or intensity of the pixel (x, y) of the standard image 7, “ $I_r(x, y)$ ” denotes the pixel value or intensity of the pixel (x, y) of the reference image 9, “ $\overline{I_s(x, y)}$ ” denotes the mean pixel value or mean intensity of the pixels within a $(2N+1)(2P+1)$ -size correlation window 215 having the pixel (x, y) of the standard image 7 as the center of the window, and “ $\overline{I_r(x, y)}$ ” denotes the mean pixel value or means intensity of the pixels within a $(2N+1)(2P+1)$ -size correlation window 216 having the pixel (x, y) of the reference image 9 as the center of the window.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 28, line 24, as follows:

In the flowchart of FIG. 5, after the step S5 is performed, the main control unit (CTR) 14 at step S6 controls the image distortion correcting unit (IDC) 22 so that the IDC 22 performs the computation of distortion correcting parameters based the relation between the feature point of the standard image and the matched point of the reference image in order to calculate a direction of the object plane. After the step S6 is performed, the CTR 14 controls at step S7 the IDC 22 so that the IDC 22 generates a distortion-corrected image on the projection plane, which is parallel to ~~the~~ the object plane, by projecting the standard image onto the projection plane through a perspective projection based on the calculated direction of the object plane. That is, the distortion-corrected image created by the IDC 22 is essentially the same as the image of the object that is taken by the imaging unit 11 from the direction perpendicular to the object plane, not from the oblique direction. After the step S7 is performed, the process of FIG. 5 ends.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 62, line 3, as follows:

As shown in FIG. 29, the image processing apparatus 50 of the present embodiment is configured such that an object region determining unit (ORD) 25 and a standard image automatic setting unit (SIAS) 27 are provided instead of the SIS 20 of FIG. 3, the ~~ORB~~ ORD 25 and the SIAS 27 are connected to the main control unit 14, an output of the ORB 25 is connected to the SIAS 27, and an output of the SIAS 27 is connected to the IDC 22.

Please delete the paragraph beginning at page 76, line 21:

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~~Further, the present invention is based on Japanese priority application No. 11-375651, filed on December 28, 1999, and Japanese priority application No. 2000-261565, filed on August 30, 2000, the entire contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference.~~